United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ NATO informs Secretary-General of its decision, in response to his request, regarding use of air strikes by its forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Secretary-General welcomes rapid response as evidence of close cooperation between United Nations and NATO.

+ In Statement on Angola, Security Council notes progress made in Lusaka talks between Angolan Government and UNITA, and demands that they redouble efforts to attain effective cease-fire and to conclude peace settlement.

+ Secretary-General deplores attempt on 5 February by members of Haitian Senate to elect new leadership; says move by participants who had promised to abstain from taking their seats impedes attempts to resolve political crisis in Haiti.

+ Preparatory meeting for African region will be held next week in Kampala, Uganda, in preparation for 1995 Ninth United Nations Congress on Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders.

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A United Nations spokesman said today that the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Manfred Wörner, called Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali last night to inform him of NATO's decision regarding the use of air strikes by its forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The decision, formally conveyed later, was taken by the North Atlantic Council in response to a request to that effect from Mr. Boutros-Ghali on Sunday, following the mortar attacks on Sarajevo last Friday and Saturday.

According to the spokesman, Mr. Boutros-Ghali was pleased by the rapid response to his request, and said it augered well for cooperation between the United Nations and NATO. The Secretary-General would be informing the Security Council of the response today, and was in contact on the subject with his Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, Yashushi Akashi.

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The Secretary-General, in a letter to the Security Council on 28 January, explained that while the use of close air support for certain specific actions by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) had already been given, the use of NATO forces for pre-emptive or punitive air strikes still required further authorization. That is what has now been given.

In a related development, a United Nations spokesman confirmed today that the Russian Federation has requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to discuss the proposed demilitarization of Sarajevo.

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In a Statement on Angola issued this evening, the Security Council noted the progress made to date in the Lusaka talks between the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and called upon the parties to renew their commitment to achieving a peaceful settlement of their conflict. It demanded that they redouble their efforts to urgently attain an effective and sustainable cease-fire and to complete work on the remaining points on the agenda.

The Council expressed deep concern at the intensification of hostilities at several locations in Angola, and deplored the loss of life and destruction of property. The only way to achieve an effective, verifiable and sustainable cease-fire, the statement continued, was for the parties to conclude a comprehensive peace agreement. The Council called on them to honour the commitments they had already voluntarily agreed to in Lusaka, to exercise maximum restraint and to stop all military actions immediately.

While acknowledging that the overall situation remained serious, the Council welcomed the improvement in the delivery of humanitarian relief assistance to the affected population in Angola. It urged the parties to continue to cooperate with the United Nations agencies and the non-governmental organizations in ensuring the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian relief supplies and the necessary security for its efficient distribution. It called upon the international community to contribute generously to humanitarian aid efforts in Angola.

The Council commended the efforts to bring about peace made by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the Chief Military Observer of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), and also those of the three observer States to the peace process, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the neighbouring States.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today deplored the attempt on 5 February by some members of the Haitian Senate to elect a new leadership, and their attempt two days later to occupy the office of the legitimate leadership of the Senate. According to a United Nations spokesman, participating in the Senate elections last Saturday were people elected during the 18 January 1993 elections in Haiti, which the international community declared to be illegal.

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The spokesman said the Senators' actions constituted a violation of the letter and the spirit of the New York Pact, concluded under the auspices of the United Nations, according to which those individuals would voluntarily abstain from taking their seats in Parliament until a Conciliation Commission had rendered its verdict on the matter. The Secretary-General, according to the spokesman, regarded those acts as discrediting Haitian democratic institutions and impeding a solution to the political crisis in that country. Mr. Boutros-Ghali appealed to all the signatories of the New York Pact to honour their commitments.

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Efforts to combat economic and organized crime, the role of criminal law in protecting the environment and the use of the mass media in crime prevention will be among the issues addressed at the second of a series of five regional meetings -- this one to be held next week in Kampala, Uganda -- in preparation for the 1995 Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

The preparatory meeting for the African region will be held from 14 to 18 February, hosted by the Government of Uganda in cooperation with the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Topics to be discussed include promoting the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme; the improvement of law enforcement agencies, prosecution systems, courts and correction administrations; strategies for preventing urban crime, including juvenile crime and violence; and victims' concerns.

The first regional preparatory meeting, for Asia and the Pacific, was held in January in Bangkok. Other regional meetings in the series will be held, during the next six weeks, in Austria, Costa Rica and Jordan.

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